

## CHAPTER 16

# Public Facilities

## Introduction

The City's public facilities and associated activities provide a high level of service to residents and businesses and serve as an economic benefit by attracting new residents and businesses. As the City grows, its population shifts, or demands for service change, new public facilities and improvements to existing facilities will be needed.

The Phase I Report, *Planning Context & Preliminary Inventory Report*, documents existing public facilities, identifies short-term capital investments, and documents preliminary levels of service for schools (public, private, and higher education), public safety, (police, fire & EMS), library and museums, and general government facilities. A number of issues related to the maintenance and management of public facilities and services have been identified as important to sustaining neighborhood livability and promoting economic vitality.

Beyond providing a high level of service to meet current needs, the City must consider the impact of future development and investment on existing facilities and plan accordingly. The management and maintenance of the City's public facilities directly influence investment decisions by future residents, local institutions, and commercial enterprises. The goals, objectives, and strategies of this element reinforce the high level of service standards currently in place and are consistent with the City's long-range goals of economic development and neighborhood livability.

## Context & Recommendations

### *Level of Services*

Capital expenditures to improve public facilities are often limited by fiscal constraints, and much-needed building improvements are put aside to meet other pressing needs. Facility and service planning would benefit from a comprehensive approach to assessing needs, identifying opportunities for coordination, and improving services. The City has recently completed a report on infrastructure projects that will be periodically reviewed and updated. The City should develop a procedure for the annual assessment of facility needs and service adequacy to determine how well the City is meeting the needs and wishes of its citizens. Following the assessment, the City should develop level of service standards or other

***Public Facilities***

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performance measures for all public facilities and services and incorporate them into the Capital Improvement Plan and annual operating budget. In some cases it may be more cost-effective to provide services on a regional basis. A Public Facilities Work Group, comprised of representatives from each City department, should be established to assist in identifying opportunities for coordinating facility and service operations throughout the City, as well as the region. This group would meet annually to review capital improvement projects.

***Consolidation of Services***

City government is among the largest owners of land and buildings with operations and departments that occupy over 100 buildings or complexes, including City Hall, eight fire stations, police and court facilities, social services and administrative offices, libraries and museums, and other general government buildings.

City investments in public facilities should lend support to existing neighborhood and commercial improvement efforts by improving citizen access to City services and facilities. Level of service standards may identify areas of the City in need of additional resources such as meeting space or access to computers that could be accommodated in existing facilities or through multi-use facilities. For this reason, the City should consider co-locating new facilities or providing multi-use facilities to address identified community needs. Consolidating services into one facility may result in more efficient service delivery. Efforts to improve access to public facilities through bike trails and sidewalks should be considered with every new development or redevelopment plan, thereby creating safe connections between neighborhoods and facilities.

***Educational Facilities***

The citizens of Lynchburg are proud of the Lynchburg Public School system and feel that it is one of the best assets the City has to offer. The school system is comprised of twelve elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools, in addition to an administrative building and maintenance and transportation facility. There are also numerous high-quality preparatory, private, and parochial schools located in the City, in addition to five colleges and universities. A sixth college, Sweet Briar, is located a short distance away in Amherst, Virginia.

Within the region, the City's schools are held in high regard. Many residents gave examples of people moving from the counties into the City in order to enroll their children in City schools. The school system's educational resources are a tremendous asset to residents, business owners, and employers, as well as the City itself. A high quality education system and access to higher education opportunities are a major factor for families considering relocation to the region; often school

**Public Facilities**

quality is the most important issue in choosing where to live in the City or the surrounding counties.

The physical condition of school buildings has been and continues to be the subject of much discussion in the City. The City has recognized the need to develop a priority system for scheduling and funding improvements. Ongoing support for investment in public schools has been a controversial issue, due to the number of projects involved and the limited funding available. The City should continue to invest in public schools and facilities and to advertise the City's commitment to high quality education by preparing and distributing accurate and timely information on school quality. The Citizen Steering Committee felt strongly that residents would be more willing to support investment in educational facilities if they were provided with more detailed information on how the investments would improve the City's position as a regional leader in public education. The City should continue to provide a wide range of post-secondary educational opportunities and expand efforts to develop and coordinate training and continuing education programs among existing institutions.

**Healthcare**

According to the US Census Bureau, in 1997 there were 177 health care and social service establishments in the City of Lynchburg, employing over 2800 people. CentraHealth, through Lynchburg General Hospital and Virginia Baptist Hospital, is the major provider of healthcare services for residents. The City should continue to encourage the development of partnerships between major health care providers and institutions of higher education to address work force development by meeting regularly with representatives from these partners to discuss possible joint projects.



**Virginia Baptist Hospital**

**Police, Fire & EMS**

The Lynchburg Police Department, a nationally accredited agency with 156 sworn officers and 59 civilian employees, provides policing services to the community. The Department is headquartered in the Public Safety Building located on Court Street. In an effort to reach out to the community, the City Police Department has adopted "community policing" as an organizational philosophy and operational strategy. Line officers maintain daily face-to-face contact with the people they serve in a clearly defined beat area and work with them to solve



**Public Facilities**

problems of crime, illicit drugs, and physical and social disorder of all types. These close connections to the City's neighborhoods provide the Police Department with a great deal of knowledge about neighborhood needs and ways to improve the overall quality of life within them. As the City begins to prepare the neighborhood conservation area plans and revitalization area plans recommended in Chapter 4, Plan Framework, the Department of Community Planning and Development will work with the Police Department to set up lines of communication with neighborhood residents and involve Police personnel in the development of these areas plans.



**Lynchburg Police Department West Building**

The Lynchburg Fire & EMS Department provides emergency services for the residents of Lynchburg and those who enter the area to work or shop. The quick response times and excellent coverage have been identified as assets to both residents and business owners within the City. Twenty-five response zones are served by eight fire and rescue stations. Two (Miller Park and Grace Street) have been identified as in need of replacement or relocation. The Fire Department is planning to conduct a study next year (2003) to review station locations and future needs. The model will take into account activity level and response times throughout the City. The results of this study will indicate whether: 1) a new station is advisable in the vicinity of the intersection of Florida and Campbell avenues, 2) station #2, located on the corner of Grace Street and Robins Road,



**Lynchburg Fire Department Station No. 6**

**Public Facilities**

should be closed, and 3) station #3, now located on Fort Avenue at Johnson Road, should be relocated closer to the Wards Road area.

The City also has the Emergency Communications facility building located at 3621 Candler's Mountain Road, which opened in 1998.

The City is a member of the Blue Ridge Regional Jail Authority, a regional jail system established to handle increasing jail populations and the poor physical conditions of existing facilities. The Lynchburg Adult Detention Center, located in the Downtown, serves as the Regional Jail Authority's central facility, housing over 400 inmates and providing central administrative, food, laundry, and maintenance services for all of the Authority's other facilities.

**Library & Museums**

The Lynchburg Public Library and the Lynchburg Museum System are operated under the City's Department of Human Services. The Public Library headquarters, located at the Plaza Shopping Center, and the Downtown Branch Library in City Hall, provide the City and region with educational and historical materials, information, recreation, and cultural activities. The Jones Memorial Library, a private research library, shares quarters with the main branch of the City library on Memorial Avenue. The Library Master Plan, completed in the late 1970s anticipated the need for an additional facility in the area of Timberlake Road to serve shifting populations. Since this plan is old, the City should reevaluate needs and potential locations for any additional facilities.

The City's Museum System is comprised of the Old Court House Museum, Point of Honor, and other sites throughout the City. Other private museums and historic sites and attractions, including Amazeement Square, the Academy of Music, Fort Early, the Lynchburg Fine Arts Center, the Daura Gallery at Lynchburg College, and the Maier Museum of Art at Randolph-Macon Woman's College serve the City and region. Chapter 11, History, Culture, Education, & the Arts, provides additional information about preserving and promoting the City's historic resources.

The Old Court House Museum is in need of restoration. Funds for architectural and engineering work have been included in the FY 2003 CIP. While the restoration is taking place, museum offices and collections will be stored and displayed in other locations. The museum is expected to move back into the Old Court House when restoration is complete.



**Old Court House Museum**

## **Public Facilities**

The City also has a wealth of additional material that reflects the history of Lynchburg, including firefighting and public works equipment. This material offers an opportunity to showcase the City's history, especially its pioneering role as one of the first localities in the United States to construct a sewer system. It is also an opportunity to educate visitors about public safety, hazardous conditions in their homes, the origin of their drinking water, and related matters.

## **Goals, Objectives & Strategies**

**Goal 1. Provide adequate public facilities and services to support the City's long-range planning goals and objectives.**

**Objective 1.A. Coordination and Performance.** Explore alternatives for coordinating facility and service planning among City departments and the public school system.

- 1) Develop standards and procedures for an annual assessment of facility and service adequacy.
- 2) Explore the feasibility of establishing level of service standards or other performance measures for public facilities and services.
- 3) Consider incorporating level of service standards or other performance measures into the Capital Improvement Plan and the annual operating budget.

**Objective 1.B. Regional Services.** Expand efforts to provide public services on a regional basis.

- 1) Establish a Regional Services Study Committee to explore regional service opportunities and identify constraints to expanded collaboration.

**Goal 2. Leverage investment in public facilities and services to support neighborhood and commercial improvement efforts.**

**Objective 2.A. Facility Access.** In planning for existing and new public facilities, explore the feasibility of co-locating facilities or providing multipurpose facilities.

- 1) Facility planning should address community needs for access to resources such as meeting space, technology, and others.
- 2) Public construction projects should include procedures for notification and ongoing updates to surrounding residents.
- 3) Improve access to schools, libraries, and other public facilities through the development of sidewalks, pedestrian trails, and bicycle paths.
- 4) Improve existing and add new signage to enable citizens to find public facilities.
- 5) Support Fire/EMS efforts to study station locations and determine where changing development patterns may require new station facilities and where older stations may be closed.

**Goal 3. Continue to reinforce the City's role as a regional leader in public education, higher education, and healthcare.**

**Objective 3.A. Partnerships.** Encourage major healthcare providers and institutions of higher education to play an active role in City planning, revitalization, workforce development, and promotional efforts.

- 1) Consider convening a committee of representatives from each of the region's institutions of higher education and healthcare to explore opportunities for public-institutional partnerships, in such areas as:

**Public Facilities**

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- Workforce development
  - Environmental data management, technology, and policy development
  - Wellness programs
- 2) Seek closer cooperation between the City and health and educational institutions regarding campus master planning and facility site development.

**Goal 4. Increase awareness of the quantity and quality of the public and private facilities and services available to City residents.**

**Objective 4.A. Promotion and Community Education.** Increase the effectiveness of efforts to inform citizens about the quality of public and private services and facilities.

- 1) Prepare and distribute educational materials promoting the City's commitment to quality education programs and public services.
- 2) Promote the location of the hospital and related health care facilities as important City assets and potential magnets for retirees.
- 3) Build support for investment in public schools and facilities by providing accurate and timely information on school quality.



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